

**“In the Twists of the Road, in the Turns of the River”**  
Online Retreat for Grace Church, St. Francisville, LA

Session 1, Saturday morning

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art:  
Thou my best thought in the day and the night,  
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,  
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord:  
Be thou my great Father and I thy true child:  
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.  
(Irish, 8<sup>th</sup> century)

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Blessed be the longing that brought you here  
And quickens your soul with wonder.  
May you have the courage to listen to the voice of desire  
That disturbs you when you have settled for something safe.  
May you have the wisdom to enter into your own unease  
To discover the new direction your longing wants you to take.  
May you come to accept your longing as divine urgency.  
May you know the urgency with which God longs for you.

By John O'Donohue

In the morning light, O God,  
may I glimpse again your image deep within me  
the threads of eternal glory  
woven into the fabric of every man and woman.  
Again may I catch sight of the mystery of the human soul  
fashioned in your likeness  
deeper than knowing,  
more enduring than time.  
And in glimpsing these threads of light  
amidst the weakness and distortions of my life  
let me be recalled  
to the strength and beauty deep in my soul.  
Let me be recalled  
to the strength and beauty in every living soul.

--John Philip Newell, *Celtic Benediction*

Glorious Lord, I give you greeting!

Let the church and the chancel praise you!  
Let the chancel and the church praise you!  
Let the plain and the hillside praise you,  
Let the world's three well-springs praise you,  
Two above wind and one above land,  
Let the dark and the daylight praise you.  
Abraham, founder of the faith, praised you:  
Let the life everlasting praise you,  
Let the birds and the honeybees praise you  
Let the shorn stems and the shoots praise you.  
Both Aaron and Moses praised you:  
Let the male and the female praise you,  
Let the seven days and the stars praise you,  
Let the air and the ether praise you,  
Let the books and the letters praise you,  
Let the fish in the swift streams praise you,  
Let the thought and the action praise you,  
Let the sand-grains and the earth-clods praise you,  
Let all the good that's performed praise you.  
And I shall praise you, Lord of glory:  
Glorious Lord, I give you greeting!

Middle Welsh, 10<sup>th</sup> century

Almighty Creator, who has made all things,  
The world cannot express all thy glories,  
Even though the grass and trees should sing.  
The Father has wrought so great a multitude of wonders  
That they cannot be equaled.  
No letters can contain them.  
No letter can express them.  
He who made the wonder of the world  
Will save us, has saved us.  
It is not too great a toil to praise the Trinity  
Purely, humbly, in skillful verse  
I should delight to give praise to the Trinity.  
It is not too great a toil to praise the Son of Mary.  
Old Welsh, 9<sup>th</sup> century

“If you wish to know the Creator, come to know his creatures.” St. Columbanus

“The One who made thee, made me likewise.”  
--prayer offered upon seeing the new moon, from *The Carmina Gadelica*

Session 2, “With the Ebb, With the Flow”

“The Chief Bard of Heaven seeks us to be words in his ode.”

Waldo Williams, Welsh poet (1904-1971)

“God has not forbidden us to love the world.”

D. Gwennalt Jones (Welsh poet, 1899-1968)

The eye of the great God of glory be upon you,  
The eye of the God of glory be on you,  
The eye of the Son of Mary Virgin be on you,  
The eye of the Spirit mild be on you,  
To aid you and to shepherd you;  
Oh the kindly eye of the Three be on you,  
To aid and to shepherd you.

*(Carmina Gadelica)*

Be the eye of God dwelling with you, the foot of Christ in guidance with you, the shower of the Spirit pouring on you, richly and generously. (A Gaelic blessing)

**“To Come Home to Yourself” by John O’Donohue**

May all that is unforgiven in you

Be released.

May your fears yield

Their deepest tranquilities.

May all that is unlived in you

Blossom into a future

Graced with love.

**An old Irish blessing:**

May the blessing of light be on you, light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight

shine upon you and warm your heart till it glows

like a great peat fire, so that the stranger may  
come and warm himself at it, as well as the friend.

And may the light shine out of the eyes of you,

like a candle set in the windows of a house,

bidding the wanderer to come in out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain  
be on you—soft, sweet rain. May it fall upon  
your spirit so that all the little flowers may spring up,  
and shed their sweetness on the air.  
And may the blessing of the great rains be on you,  
may they beat upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean,  
and leave there many a shining pool where the blue  
of heaven shines, and sometimes a star.  
And may the blessing of the earth  
be on you—the great round earth.  
May you ever have a kindly greeting  
for people you pass as you're going along the road.  
And now may the Lord, the Trinity of Love,  
Bless you, and bless you kindly. Amen.

**An old Gaelic blessing:**

May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face.  
May the rains fall softly upon your fields until we meet again.  
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

**The Ebb and the Flow**

As it was,  
As it is,  
As it shall be  
Evermore,  
O Thou Triune of Grace!  
With the ebb,  
With the flow,  
O Thou Triune of Grace!  
With the ebb,  
With the flow.

*Carmina Gadelica, II, 217*